415 "The best pieces of equipment of which they can boast are
923 some small vessels of "palo santo" [lignum vital—a kind of wood--Translator] and a few small clay pots with very narrow mouths and two little handles which serve them as water flasks on their frequent raiding forays."

"Men and women alike shave their heads completely. They
302 use, for that purpose, the sharp jaw of a certain fish, and their own teeth serve them to pare their nails. They cover themselves as best
291 they are able from their waists to their knees. The men, on gala
286 occasions, often wear a sort of sleeveless jacket and hang a kind of
415 [276] bag from one shoulder in which they keep a crude wooden pipe, fire making equipment and other nicknacks. Both the bag and the coat are knitted, made from agave or chaguar fiber, and curiously marked.
302 They pull out their beards, eyelashes and eyebrows, and either to improve their looks or in order to appear more terrible in battle, they blacken their faces and chests with coal dust."

"Their favorite food is fish, and lacking this, all kinds of wild
262 fruits or roots other than the poisonous ones. Their principal vegetable food, on which they can count for a quarter of each year and which they store to some small extent, is the fruit of the algarrobo, chañar and mistol. They also eat, and that without repugnance, lizards, locusts, crickets [593], mice, and even eggs after they have been abandoned, together with other filth. They eat fish and any other kind of meat
[252] or roots, roasted or boiled, and know of no other way of preparing food.
● [261] They can withstand hunger admirably, and when they are unable to get other food they spend their time lying about chewing some herb or leaf from the forest."

"From the algarroba [pod which grows on the algarrobo tree--
273 Translator] they make a beverage which is extremely delicious to their
579 taste and which intoxicates them and makes them very fierce. Their drunken parties almost always end in a fierce fight which would have dire results were it not that the women, who never drink of that liquor, are careful to hide the arrows and all other offensive weapons and to hold back and separate those engaged in fighting."

"When the algarroba starts to turn yellow, they place in a cen-
533 tral place among the huts, the pimpin, which is a log, concave at its
222 upper end, covered with a piece of hide. A drummer with a belt about

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which even in the most favorable physical circumstances can occur quite often among children who are the offspring of parents who are too closely consanguineous. Marriages of this type (between close relatives) are not rare here, and -- this is not just an extra trip bearing grist for my mill -- I have been assured that of the very small number of defective persons these latter, the deaf-mute, are the least rare among the Indians of these parts; among whom, let it be said, I have not seen a single cretin or cotudo [coto is a malignant swelling of the throat -- Translator] and that in spite of the fact that aberrants of this type abound in the north and western part of the Republic.

To come back to my deaf-mute: The occasion of my meeting him was brought about by his having been attacked by a tiger [jaguar--Translator] which mauled him horribly while he was gathering firewood. (This is one further proof as to the difficulty of putting up a successful struggle for life in these waste places if one is not in the full possession of all one's senses). We were called to treat the poor wretch, but he refused our ministrations energetically, preferring to put himself in the hands of the witch doctors.

Despite what I have stated above, the Indians themselves [847] have assured me that it sometimes [222] happens that a mother will allow her children to die if their father or any other man who will care for them dies or goes away.

However, this must happen only very seldom (and does 261 not weaken our argument regarding the handicapped) for among the inhabitants of a given village and particularly between relatives there exists a truly charming sharing of goods -- yet when food is scarce one may suppose that the phenomenon is more common. But such a state of food scarcity is probably felt less owing to the great variety of foods acceptable to the Indians and their really remarkable adaptability to the availability of food: they can live on a very skimpy diet when need arises, and then gorge themselves with a vengeance when they hit a time of plenty.

The elasticity of the stomachs of these savages is truly 261 extraordinary. When not on the march a mouthful of food is 147 enough for them; while fresh air, the exertions of the hunt, of fishing, of harvesting and of traveling in pursuit of these activities

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or of waging war, coupled with an iron constitution, allows them 147
to stuff themselves like gunny sacks.

A remarkable thing! Be it because of racial relationship, 261
be it rather because of the great similarity in their way of life, 171
the fact is that this same pendulum-like swing between extreme 147
frugality and enormous voracity is also to be found among the gauchos, and all the other inhabitants of the Argentine non-urban areas in general, not excluding other peoples of the earth who live in similar social conditions. So true is it that the same causes produce the same results regardless of where they happen to occur.

These Indians are very jealous of their equality. They do 554
not allow others to surpass them and the women are the first to attack any of their companions who, either because of natural gifts or the husband's ability, find themselves approaching a favorable position.

I cannot forget a bitter disillusion which fell to my lot on 556
one occasion. Tajo, my Mataco language teacher, has a wife 123
who is an extraordinarily beautiful Gypsy type and looks, at a distance, like one of the more beautiful women of Buenos Aires. The husband was very much in love with her and I thought that I could not do less than to make her a present of a few cheap trinkets and garments. The husband added a few more things to my gifts and so the young woman was able to dress herself up in a manner unrivaled in the area.

As soon as she went out to show off her finery before her friends, dressed in her brightly colored clothes, she was received with admiration, but also with cries of protest.

I, who have often been led to sin in the direction of artistic platonism, wished to see the Mataco beauty in her new regalia and felt I had a certain right to [223] demand to be allowed to do so, but I found that it was not possible. The chief had forbidden her to wear her gifts because the other squaws had complained that her luxurious attire detracted from their own value; and so the young matron had been obliged to distribute her clothing among the others and to keep just a few scraps for herself which she would wear only every now and then, and then not openly.

Even among the savages one must adhere to sumptuary laws!

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Chapter VIII.

Education of children. Puberty ceremonies.

855 In the last chapter I have pointed out that infanticide, as practised by the Chaco Indians in certain cases, cannot be explained as a token of a lack of parental feeling in general. The Indian parents love their children, feed them well and try to protect them not only against natural dangers but also against evil spirits by means of body-painting and amulets. To what extent they take care of the well-being of their offspring is best shown by the custom of couvade. Even at those times of the year when the food is scarce I do not believe that the Indians allow their children to suffer from hunger. At the algaroba 855 season again, when there is an abundance of food, the children go on 261 eating from morning till night, and since the food to a great extent consists of fruits more or less indigestible, it is at that time a common thing to see young children of both sexes whose stomachs are abnormally distended so as to make them really paunchy. Gluttony is a characteristic feature of the Chaco Indians during the »season», but especially of the children.

855 The Chaco Indians bring up their children in complete liberty. Pa- rents are never seen punishing their children for disobedience or faults 861 committed. This is partly due to the fact that the sense of what is proper and permissible is not developed among the Indians in the same way as in civilized societies. The Indian hates restraint and fetters of any kind, he wants to be free and independent himself and grants his children the same liberty. The latter, on the other hand, from an Indian point of view very seldom appear punishable, since they easily accommodate themselves to the customs and moral views of the tribe. An Indian boy may rob or do some other harm to a stranger, be he an Indian of a foreign tribe or a white man, but he will, from a natural instinct, respect the property of a